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our consent to it. All I can say is, that never have I been asked to believe anything more transcending reason by any philosopher. The scientific men and the physicists and the experimentalists seem, certainly, to have got themselves into a quagmire regarding this solid without density or weight, and I wish them well out of it."

Thus the nature of ether cannot be said to be much more clearly defined than that of gravitation. Both remain unsolved mysteries, closely related to one another, and present many similar difficulties. Perhaps some "metaphysical Newton" will one day solve the problem!

HEREWARD CARRINGTON.

NEW YORK.

THE FRENCH NEWTON.

She was, in fact, a woman of genius.

Ernest Renan.

In the early days of our civilization, men, being finer, more intelligent, more keen-eyed and more joyful than to-day, became universally impassioned for Truth and Justice, those two lovely sisters upon whom we modern civilized people, herded into loathsome cities and indulging too often in tiresome, stupid toils, seem to look now with indifference and contempt. True sons of nature, amidst which they lived peacefully, they knew not yet of equatorials and telescopes, of experimental retorts, tubes and flakes, of balloons for experimenting in the upper regions of the air and drags and nets for researches into the lower regions of the sea, of registering thermometers and barometric charts, of scientific cinematographs and wireless Marconi. Indeed their five senses were so acute, so subtle that they almost amounted to a sixth one. Lovers of life and beauty with which their poetical souls were ceaselessly enraptured, and too respectful of natural life to irrationally imprison it in barbarous fashions, they enjoyed themselves in constantly developing their marvelous gifts, either in long journeys through mountains and valleys, forests and pastures, jungles and deserts, or in adventurous travels upon the liquid plains, or also during long pauses for rest on the verdant, fragrant islands, or by the well-sheltered shores of Hellas and its Asiatic colonies!

In such a splendidly luminous era—far too short, alas!—which rejuvenated humanity from the extreme east of Asia to the western

extremity of the Mediterranean world, about seven hundred years before the advent of Jesus, these giants of human thought sprang up. This wonderful constellation of geniuses whose thought, too deep and too synthetic for the narrow minds of the academies, remained misunderstood and practically unknown to the Athenians, who were then comparable in ignorance, frivolity and disregard of truth and justice to our "civilized people" of the present day! Later, Greece and its direct heirs, Rome and medieval Europe, paid indeed a costly price for this incomprehensive attitude of their fathers towards those who brought in themselves the salvation of the ancient world! Unable to oppose the smallest barrier to the invasion of the Oriental gods, antiquity in its last days became the prey for Paul's monotheism, that intolerant, dreadful curse which for nearly two thousand years usurped and retained the place in public opinion which should have been occupied by the luminous and valuable doctrines of the Ionian and Abderite philosophers!

Buried so many centuries under a colossal heap of falsehood and crime, the Ionian philosophy, like the phoenix, was suddenly restored to life on the banks of Lake Geneva, about half a century ago! Hesitating at first and doubtful of itself, it soon recovered its senses and rapidly assumed the full consciousness of its strength and value. Then appeared from time to time, in many periodicals of both continents, masterful studies on much discussed subjects. About twenty years after this miraculous resurrection, the grand, sublime natural philosophy, already reconstructed in all its parts, reappeared as suddenly as Minerva from the brain of Zeus, condensed and concluded beforehand in a small code of the Logos in which the logical law governing the whole of life was formulated once for all.¹ Finally, in the year 1900, a Parisian publisher edited the Bible of synthetic science, a wonderful, unique philosophical work, opening unlimited perspectives to all minds that long to penetrate the riddles of the cosmos!

Perhaps at this point I shall somewhat astonish my readers when I say that the philosophical brain that undertook and brought to an end such a titanic work was a feminine one! Yes, the "French Newton," the immortal writer of "The Constitution of the Cosmos" and of "The History of the Heavens" was one of those creatures condemned by the Catholic church as utterly vicious, malignant, haunted by devils, one of these creatures whom current ethics proclaimed irretrievably stupid! This really extraordinary woman,

¹*Le bien et la loi morale.*

this vast genius whose bold, though generally just, inferences revolutionized science was Clémence Royer, the translator and intelligent critic of Darwin's *Origin of Species* who upset the old erroneous principles of theoretical science, declaring they had hitherto shown only the reverse of realities, and who, while playing with steel balls, discovered the molecular constitution of water in its three states and consequently the approximate constitution of the greatest number of chemical bodies.

But this is only one among the many inspirations of the great forgotten woman philosopher, inspirations which have thrown such dazzling light into dark branches of knowledge. The overturning of the hypothesis of attraction is another one and not the least important in its consequences. Adopting the beautiful conception of Demokritos who had guessed that the cosmos is filled entirely with elastic fluid units, Clémence Royer, with a remarkable power of induction, showed that all phenomena in nature are explainable and explainable only through this process of perpetual repulsion between the atoms. In fact, such a system is far in advance of the Bergsonian concept of a "dynamical continuity." Here in Clémence Royer's theory we have at last an integral definitive philosophy of nature, whereas the Bergsonian thought is only a very misty, esoteric, superficial one, only a very timid insight of a logical truth already duly discovered!

Other very remarkable inductions of the "French Newton" have been corrective of and complementary to the Darwinian theory. Let us only quote here the two principal ones. One is the hypothesis of the plurality of organic sources rediscovered recently by the Mary Brothers and called by them *polyphyletism*. The other is the theory of long polar rotations whose admission now explains most of the enigmas of geology and paleontology. We may say here that the history of the earth from such a standpoint is an extremely interesting science, much more beautiful, much more pleasant than Jules Verne's and H. G. Wells's novels. To-day we can clearly realize how the ancestor of man, naked and without natural weapons, forever left his oceanic abode in the same period as all the ancestors of reptiles, birds and mammals; how he fought for the conquest and exclusive possession of the land against the other living species; how finally he took their place and destroyed them without restraint and discrimination; how in our own days, upon this planet conquered by him, he goes on to seek for his rule and law which he will not find until he has attained a thorough insight of his environ-

ment, of his true nature, of his true situation in the cosmos, until he will have realized how to harmonize his own life with the life of the cosmos!

Such, in a few words, is the original conception of the cosmic substance rediscovered, reconstructed in all its parts and considerably extended by the cyclopedic brain of a woman. Such is the immense, the grand synthetic philosophy, both cosmic and human, far the finest, the most complete, the most exact of all, in fact the only one which is exact, the only one which supports discussion, the only one worthy to be studied and nevertheless the most unjustly misunderstood, the most blindly criticized, the most stubbornly and systematically boycotted by all sects, whatever they may be! At the very moment when I am writing these lines, eleven years have elapsed since the death of the "French Newton," and with the exception of a few cuttings reprinted here and there by sympathizers, not a single one of her immortal works has been reprinted yet, not a single one of her unpublished manuscripts has been published by the committee she entrusted with the duty of seeing to their publication. It is true that this committee is yet unaware of its own existence, as I ascertained by a recent letter from one of its members. At the present day, atomistic dynamism is not taught in a single school in Paris! No French scientific group, except one composed of two dozens of adherents, takes any interest in the diffusion of the rational doctrine! Yet, two years ago at the Stanislas College in Paris, under the direction of Jesuits, M. Saulze made a most stupid criticism of the theory of "Mademoiselle Royer." More than that, in October, 1912, six hundred copies of my little book, *L'atome fluide*, suddenly disappeared from their place of storage, stolen or perhaps destroyed by a hand supposed unseen! It is clear that a new cosmic theory which hunts Jehovah out of the universe prevents its supporters from enjoying peaceful sleep!

But truth is an invincible force! Having awakened from her long lethargy, she has resumed her course at last, and if her first steps were rather clumsy and uncertain, she is now treading an onward path and nothing can stop her advance throughout the world. Without being a prophet, I can foretell that my booklet, of which but a few hundred copies have been bought, will be translated tomorrow into many languages, that by the mere force of truth it will indeed become a great success, and that each copy of it which has been stolen will bring me at least a thousand readers! In

September, 1912, a few weeks before this imbecile deed was committed, the International Freethought inaugurated a memorial inscription at the farm of Praz-Perey on the banks of Lake Geneva, at the house in which Clémence Royer's thought freed itself from darkness and prejudices and opened to the light of scientific truth. The ceremony at Praz-Perey was exceedingly simple, indeed such as Clémence Royer herself would have wished it. Unfortunately, when I read the speeches delivered on that day, I had the impression that the speakers did not exactly realize the true extent, value and import of the work that the immortal woman leaves behind her. As to ourselves, having spent six whole years in diffusing and completing the doctrine, we can advance it as the remedy which our humanity is waiting and hoping for in order to be cured once for all of the religious mania and of that discomforting skepticism which results from the loss of one's dearest creeds and beliefs!

ARISTIDES PRATELLE.

PARIS, FRANCE.

DR. EDMUND MONTGOMERY: AN AFTERMATH.

The late philosopher Dr. Edmund Montgomery, who died on April 17, 1911, an obituary sketch appearing in *The Open Court* for July, 1911, left as the crystallization of his intellectual life two important volumes: *Philosophical Problems in the Light of Vital Organization* and *The Revelation of Present Experience*. The former received extended notice in *The Monist*, Vol. XIX, No. 4. The latter was reviewed editorially in the issue of July 1911. In comment on our review of this book Charles Alva Lane writes to *The Monist* expressing disagreement with the reviewer's assertion that Dr. Montgomery "bases his monism upon a mental substance as ultimate reality," and Mr. Lane's strictures are similarly urged by William M. Salter.

Mr. Lane expresses his criticism in a letter as follows:

"It seems incredible that you would charge Montgomery with theistic tendencies, even though he 'favors a teleological interpretation of nature'—the Charybdis into which he runs in his efforts to escape the Scylla of the mechanistic creeds.

"In his attempts to define the ultimate reality Montgomery has, indeed, been compelled to bring to bear all his lingual dexterity, for it requires pretty deft juggling of thought to avoid identifying